STILETTO HEELS TEAM

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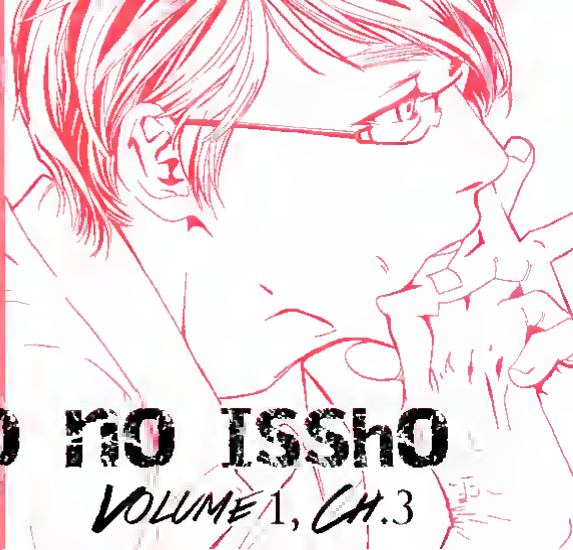
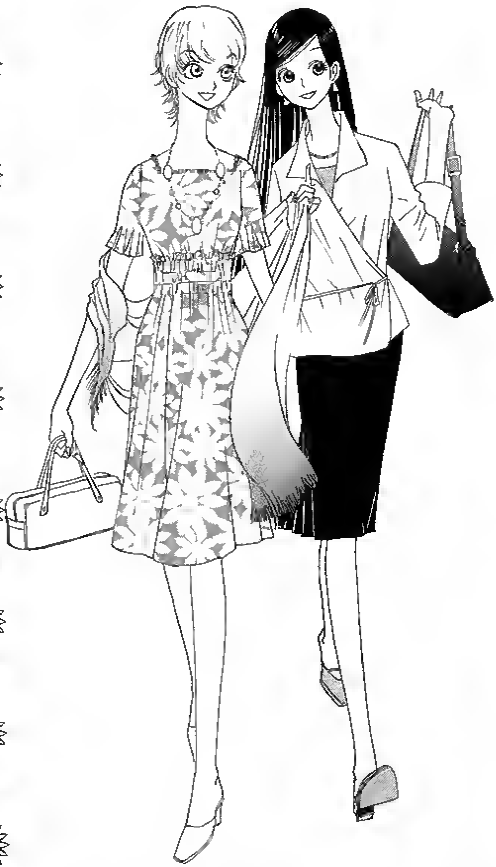
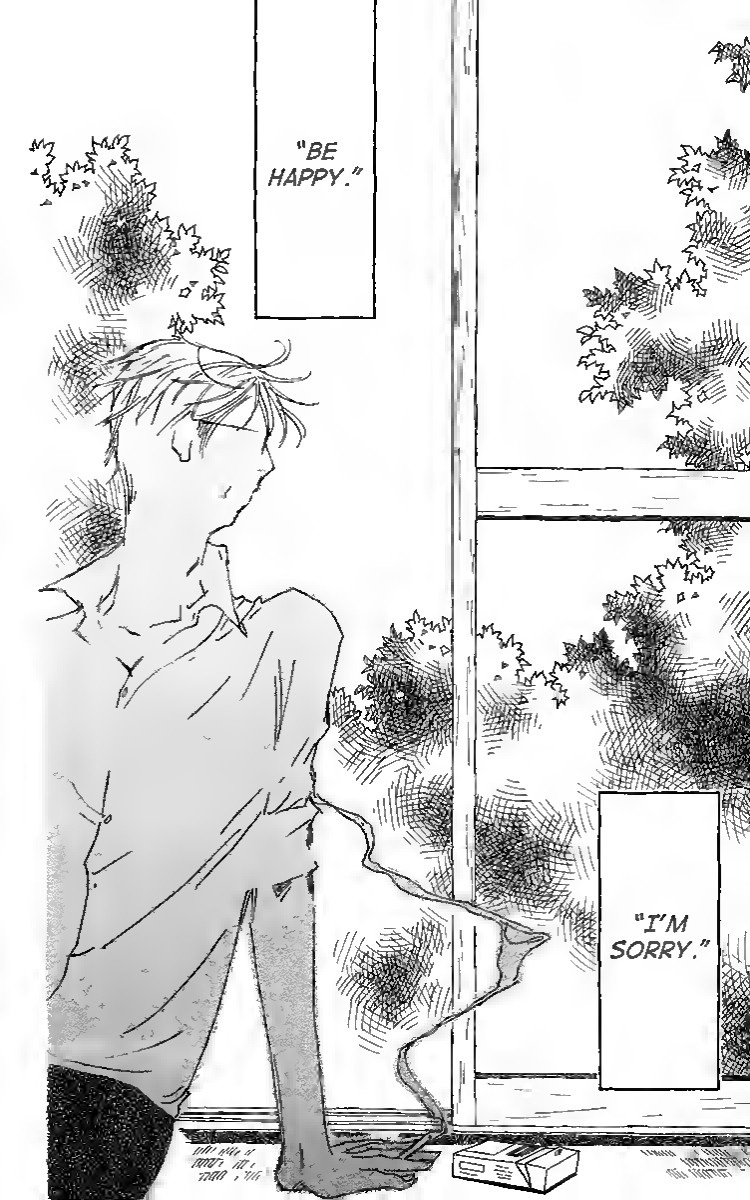


otoko no issho

VOLUME 1, CH.3

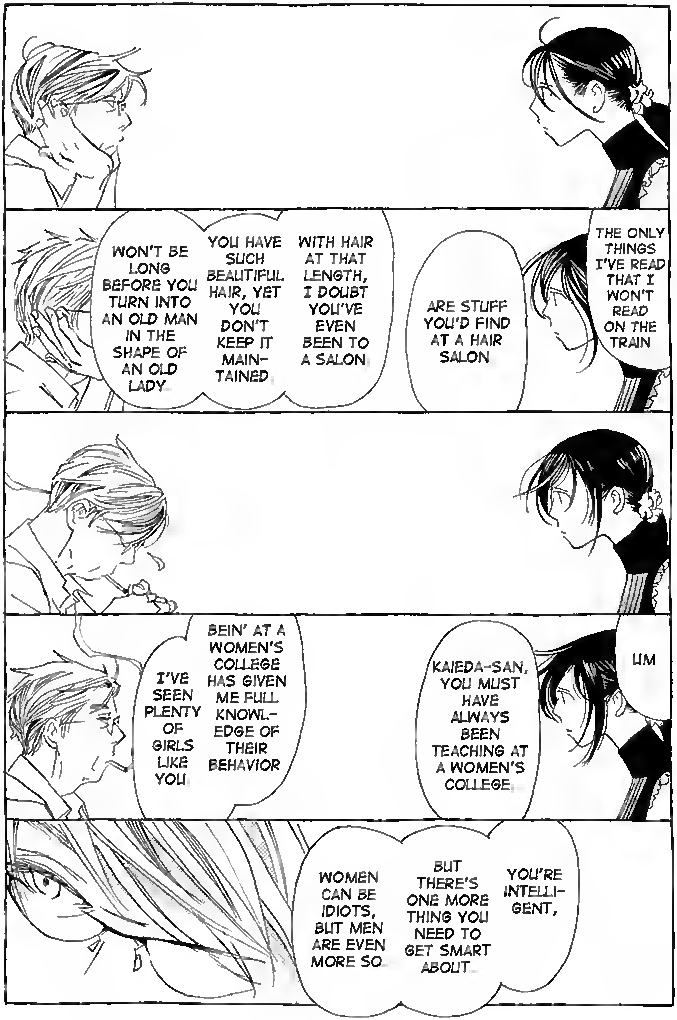


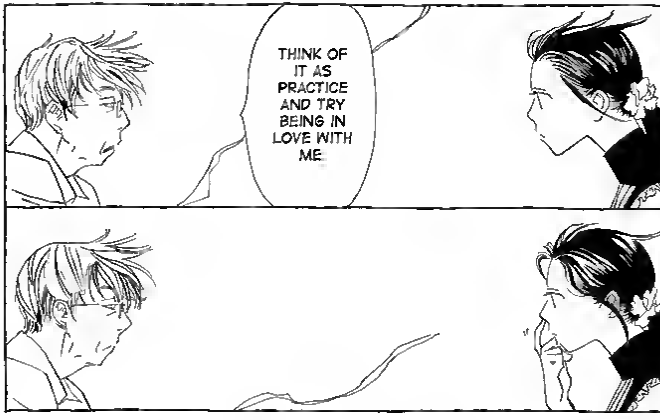

"BE HAPPY."
"I'M SORRY."

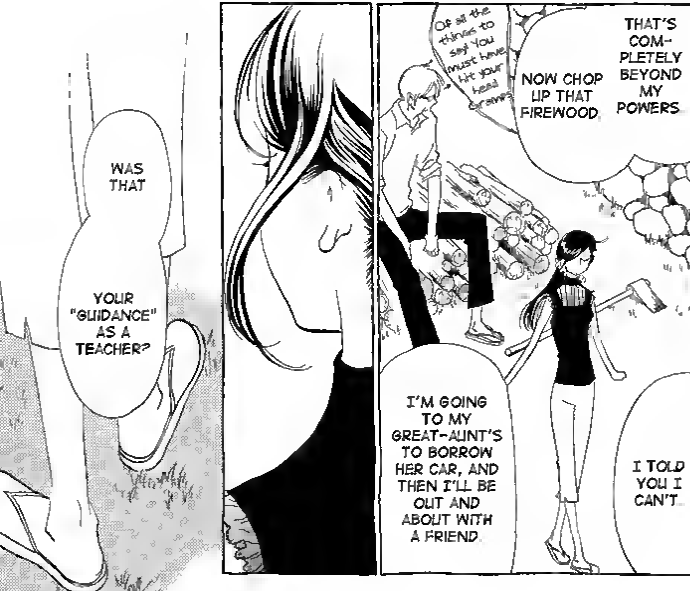
SHEESH
MORNING.
WHAT... TIME IS IT?
7 O' CLOCK.
TCH! ONLY 7!
COOK UP SOME BREAK-FAST, WILL YA?
HA!
YOUR BOOBS MIGHT POP OUT AGAIN, SO I COVERED YOU WITH THE BLANKET.
Phew
FOOD, I NEED FOOD
KIDDING
Huh?

ANY EGGS?
I FORGOT TO GO TO MY GREAT-AUNT'S YESTERDAY
WHAT? BUT IT'S ONE OF MY FAVORITES
MAYBE I SHOULD BUY PJS
From Akimoto Misaki
Subject As of right now,
I'm headed to Hakata
- END -
IT'S JUST FOR A DAY
I WON'T SPOIL YOU
I WAS SPOILED GROWIN' UP
To Akimoto Misaki
Subject As of right
Be careful, okay?
- END -
ARE YOU TRYING TO GET ON MY NERVES AL-READY?
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE UNPOPU-LAR
THEY SMOKE THE SAME BRAND

RUSTLE...
RESPONDING BETTER THAN YESTERDAY AT LEAST
YOU SOUND BETTER
MY GRANDMOTHER PASSED AWAY,
AND NOW A GENTLEMAN CONNECTED WITH HER,
A MAN (A COLLEGE PROFESSOR) HOLDING THE KEY TO HER "ANNEX",
HAS SHOWN UP IT'S BEEN THREE DAYS...
YES.
TYPHOON NO.7 OFF THE PHILIPPINE COASTAL
CENTRIFUGAL ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE AT 940 HPA AND
SONY
YOU READ THE "WEEKLY SHUNJU"?
THEY'RE ALL MAGAZINES YOU'D FIND AS HANGING ADVERTISEMENT ON THE TRAIN
YOU'RE LIKE AN OLD MAN
DON'T YOU READ WOMEN'S MAGAZINES?

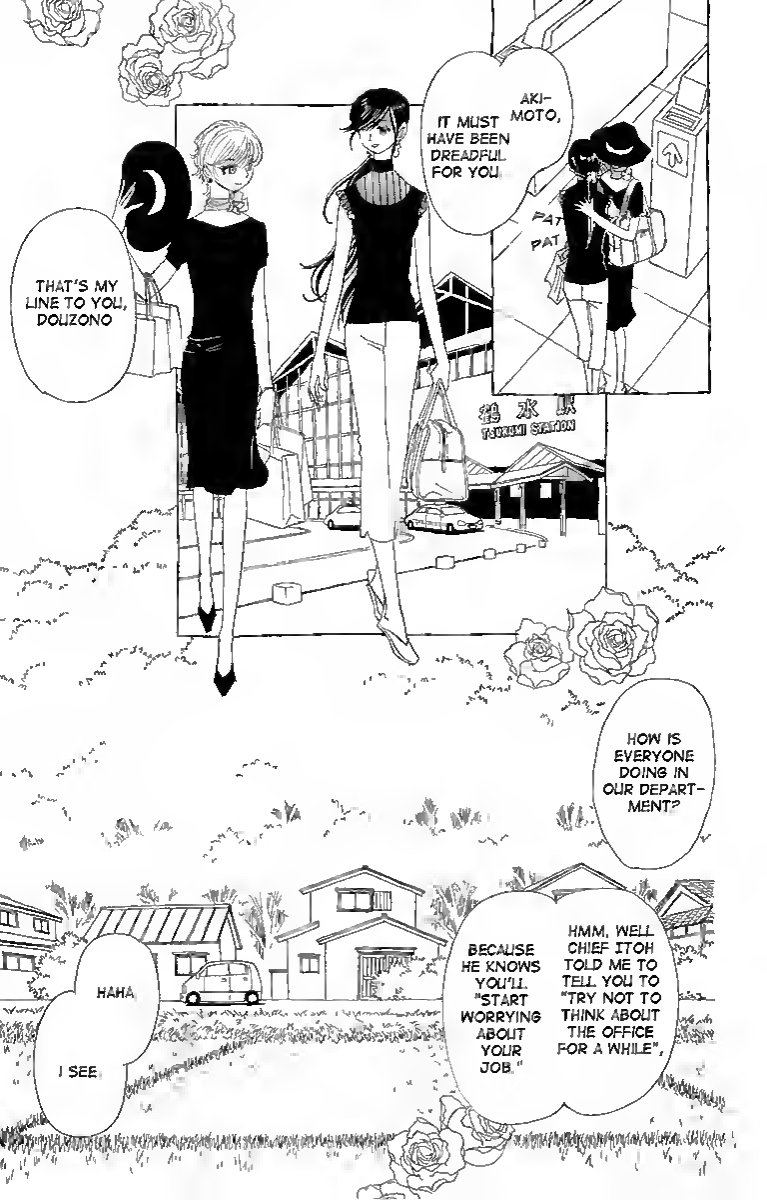

THE ONLY THINGS I'VE READ THAT I WON'T READ ON THE TRAIN
ARE STUFF YOU'D FIND AT A HAIR SALON.
WITH HAIR AT THAT LENGTH, I DOUBT YOU'VE EVEN BEEN TO A SALON.
YOU HAVE SUCH BEAUTIFUL HAIR, YET YOU DON'T KEEP IT MAINTAINED.
WON'T BE LONG BEFORE YOU TURN INTO AN OLD MAN IN THE SHAPE OF AN OLD LADY.
UM
KAIEDA-SAN, YOU MUST HAVE ALWAYS BEEN TEACHING AT A WOMEN'S COLLEGE.
BEIN' AT A WOMEN'S COLLEGE HAS GIVEN ME FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR BEHAVIOR
I'VE SEEN PLENTY OF GIRLS LIKE YOU.
YOU'RE INTELLIGENT,
BUT THERE'S ONE MORE THING YOU NEED TO GET SMART ABOUT.
WOMEN CAN BE IDIOTS, BUT MEN ARE EVEN MORE SO.


THINK OF IT AS PRACTICE AND TRY BEING IN LOVE WITH ME.


I'M GOING TO MY GREAT-AUNT'S TO BORROW HER CAR, AND THEN I'LL BE OUT AND ABOUT WITH A FRIEND.
I TOLD YOU I CAN'T.
Of all the things to say! You must have hit your head, crow!
NOW CHOP UP THAT FIREWOOD.
THAT'S COM-PLETELY BEYOND MY POWERS.
WAS THAT
YOUR "GUIDANCE" AS A TEACHER?

BEATS ME

11→


AKI-
MOTO,
IT MUST HAVE BEEN DREADFUL FOR YOU.
PAT
PAT
THAT'S MY LINE TO YOU, DOUZONO
TSUKUI STATION
HOW IS EVERYONE DOING IN OUR DEPART-MENT?
HMM, WELL CHIEF ITOH TOLD ME TO TELL YOU TO "TRY NOT TO THINK ABOUT THE OFFICE FOR A WHILE",
BECAUSE HE KNOWS YOU'LL "START WORRYING ABOUT YOUR JOB."
HAHA
I SEE.

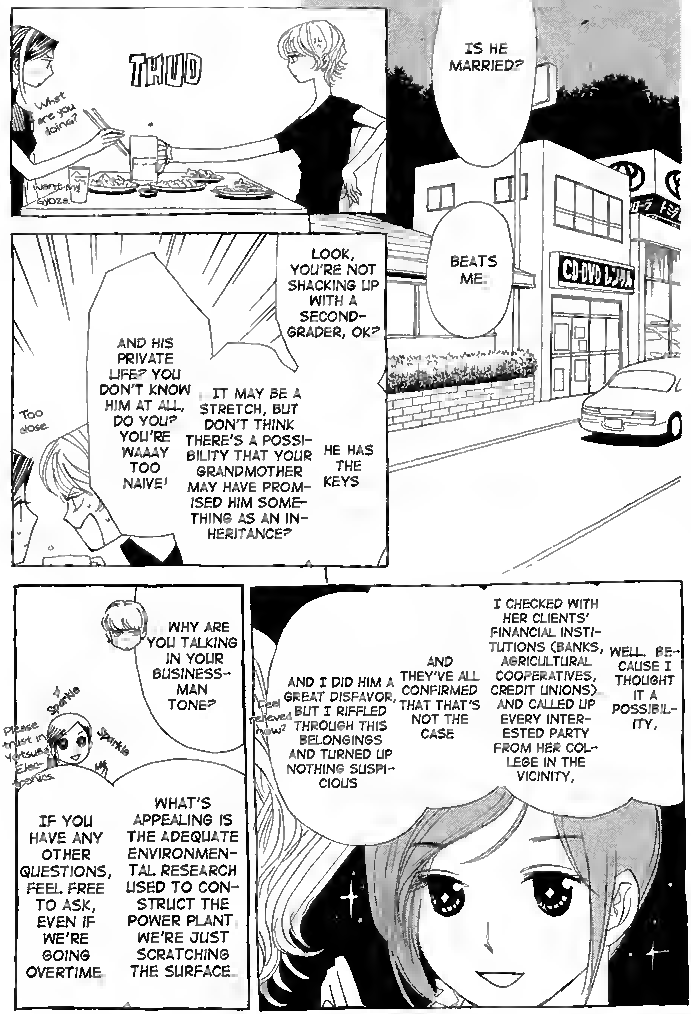
HERE
IT'S FROM KOMINE.
Before the spirit of the deceased
Komine Soichi
HE'S REALLY WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
HE'S THE ONE WHO TOLD ME TO STAY A FEW EXTRA DAYS IF I COULD.
I SEE...
KOMINE SOICHI (CO-WORKER)
HOBBIES: FISHING
TENNIS
HUH? FROM NERIMA? IS HE DIETING?
HOW IS HE DOING?
YOU AREN'T MAKING BENTOS FOR HIM?
HE'S ALWAYS GOING TO THE KOMBINI* AT NIGHT, SO HE PUT ON A FEW POUNDS
LOOKS LIKE IT.
FINE, FINE HE'S GOING TO COMUTE BY BIKE TO WORK START-ING NEXT WEEK.
UM...
*Convenient Store

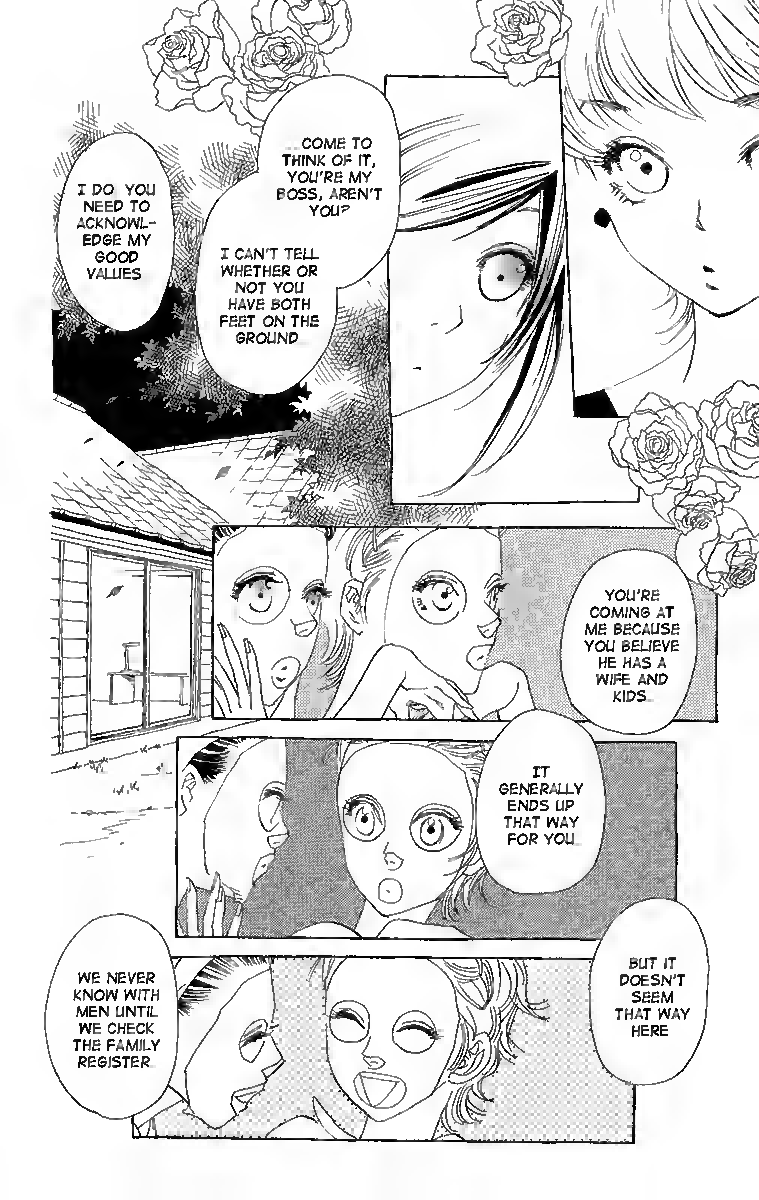
HEY, MIND IF I OPEN THE PRESENT?
GO AHEAD!
YEAH...
LOOK!
SHIGURE-STYLE OMI BEEF IN GERMAN BREAD AND SALTED CARAMEL!
TAKE-YOKAN* AND SWEET-FISH COOKED IN NECTAR... WHERE'S HIS SENSE OF UNITY?
HA HA HA
I BET HE JUST GRABBED WHATEVER HE WANTED TO EAT HIMSELF.
*Sweet bean jelly in bamboo husk
WHOA!
Dior
FAKE FIBER WHITENING MASK
7 SHEETS
HEY, FACIAL MASKS?!
TO REJUVENATE OUR TIRED SUMMER SKIN.
LET'S DO IT AT NIGHT. IT'LL FEEL GOOD ONCE IT COOLS DOWN.
WHERE'S YOUR CLOSET?
Cheese and crackers... she must have been craving a drink...

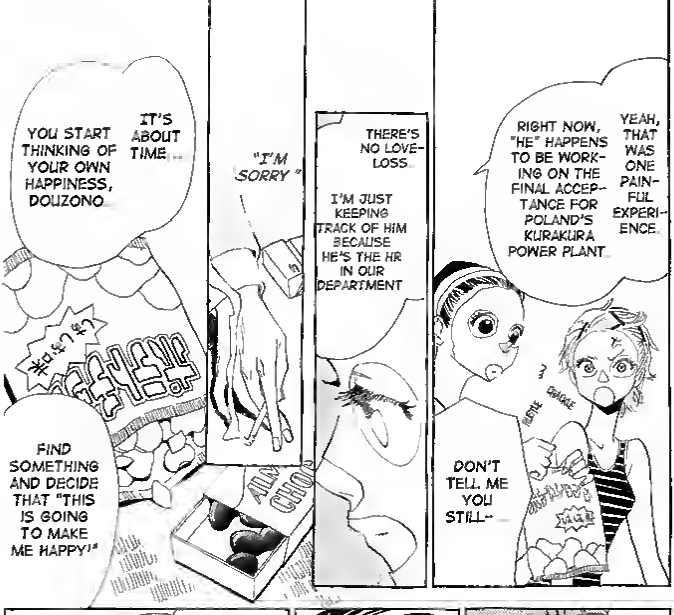
THUD
HUH?
Sakes here...
HELLO
YOTSUBA ELECTRONICS CO
Atomic Energy Division
Project Management Department
Chief Clerk Misaki Akimoto
AKIMOTO, WANT TO GO TO THE BATHS?
HUH? BUT YOU HAVE ONE HERE... in your house
TSUGUMI-SAN AND I ARE CO-WORKERS AND HAVE ALWAYS DEPENDED ON EACH OTHER
BUT, WELL, SHE'S EXTRAORDINARILY SUPERIOR AND HAS PROBABLY REACHED THE STARS BY NOW
IS THAT SO? THANKS FOR TAKING CARE OF HER
OH, MY
THERE'S A HOT SPRINGS NEARBY
WE DON'T USE GAS HERE, SO WHO KNOWS WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN?
HUH?
WHA-?
HM?

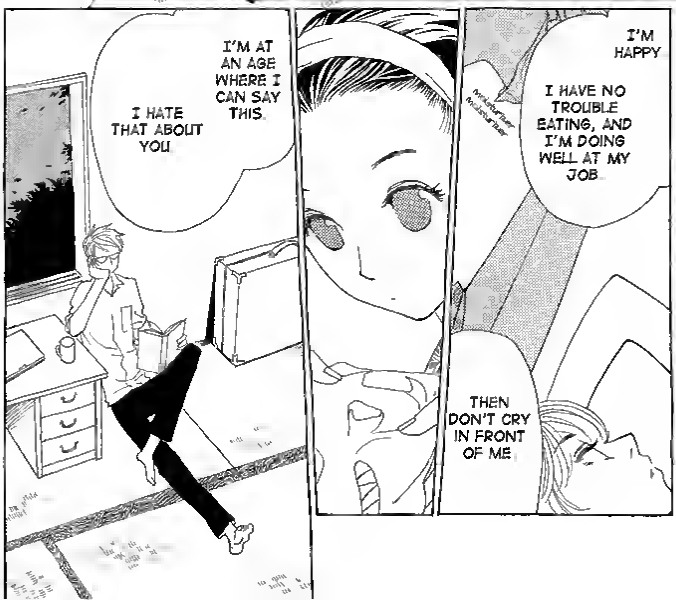
WOW,
IT LOOKS NEW. DID IT OPEN APPEAR JUST RECENTLY?
YEP. THE VOLCANIC BELT IS UNDERNEATH, SO THEY APPEAR RATHER SUDDENLY
AHA!
CITIZENS PAY 200 YEN, WHILE EVERYONE ELSE PAYS 400. YOU LIVE HERE, SO YOU ONLY PAY 200 RIGHT?
I DON'T HAVE A CERTIFICATE OF RESIDENCE
200円
400円
SAY,
SHE'S LIVED HERE FOR A WHILE, SO CAN WE PAY THE CITIZEN'S FEE?
Huh?
FRONT
SHE'S THE GRANDCHILD OF PEOPLE WHO LIVED HERE GENERATION AFTER GENERATION, AND SHE'S BOUGHT LOTS OF THINGS LOCALLY
Stop it
FRONT
You're just making it harder for me the next time around.
GET
See? You just have to speak up.

YOU MET HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME THREE DAYS AGO?
YEP
YOU GUYS ARE STRANGERS?
YEP
SPL ASH
YOU'RE JUST GOING TO GET YOURSELF TRAPPED IN THE SAME PATTERN BY LETTING HIM LIVE THERE
I HAVEN'T EX-PLAINED ANYTHING YET
I GET THE PICTURE


THUD
What are you doing?
Hanging out
Gyoza!
IS HE MARRIED?
BEATS ME.
LOOK, YOU'RE NOT SHACKING UP WITH A SECOND-GRADER, OK?
HE HAS THE KEYS
IT MAY BE A STRETCH, BUT DON'T THINK THERE'S A POSSIBILITY THAT YOUR GRANDMOTHER MAY HAVE PROMISED HIM SOMETHING AS AN INHERITANCE?
AND HIS PRIVATE LIFE? YOU DON'T KNOW HIM AT ALL. DO YOU? YOU'RE WAAAY TOO NAIVE!
Too close
WELL, BECAUSE I THOUGHT IT A POSSIBILITY.
I CHECKED WITH HER CLIENTS' FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (BANKS, AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES, CREDIT UNIONS) AND CALLED UP EVERY INTERESTED PARTY FROM HER COLLEGE IN THE VICINITY,
AND THEY'VE ALL CONFIRMED THAT THAT'S NOT THE CASE
AND I DID HIM A GREAT DISFAVOR, BUT I RIFFLED THROUGH THIS BELONGINGS AND TURNED UP NOTHING SUSPICIOUS
Have I betrayed you?
WHY ARE YOU TALKING IN YOUR BUSINESS-MAN TONE?
Please order in virtue of Electronics.
Sparkle
Sparkle
WHAT'S APPEALING IS THE ADEQUATE ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH USED TO CONSTRUCT THE POWER PLANT WE'RE JUST SCRATCHING THE SURFACE.
IF YOU HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS, FEEL FREE TO ASK, EVEN IF WE'RE GOING OVERTIME.


...COME TO THINK OF IT, YOU'RE MY BOSS, AREN'T YOU?
I CAN'T TELL WHETHER OR NOT YOU HAVE BOTH FEET ON THE GROUND
I DO. YOU NEED TO ACKNOWL-EDGE MY GOOD VALUES
YOU'RE COMING AT ME BECAUSE YOU BELIEVE HE HAS A WIFE AND KIDS.
IT GENERALLY ENDS UP THAT WAY FOR YOU.
BUT IT DOESN'T SEEM THAT WAY HERE
WE NEVER KNOW WITH MEN UNTIL WE CHECK THE FAMILY REGISTER.


YOU START THINKING OF YOUR OWN HAPPINESS, DOUZONO...
IT'S ABOUT TIME...
"I'M SORRY"
THERE'S NO LOVE-LOSS...
I'M JUST KEEPING TRACK OF HIM BECAUSE HE'S THE HR IN OUR DEPARTMENT
RIGHT NOW, "HE" HAPPENS TO BE WORKING ON THE FINAL ACCEPTANCE FOR POLAND'S KURAKURA POWER PLANT...
YEAH, THAT WAS ONE PAINFUL EXPERIENCE...
FIND SOMETHING AND DECIDE THAT "THIS IS GOING TO MAKE ME HAPPY!"
DON'T TELL ME YOU STILL--...


I HATE THAT ABOUT YOU.
I'M AT AN AGE WHERE I CAN SAY THIS.
I'M HAPPY.
I HAVE NO TROUBLE EATING, AND I'M DOING WELL AT MY JOB.
THEN DON'T CRY IN FRONT OF ME.

IT'S ONE BIG JOKE
YOU WALKED INTO OUR BIG CORPORATION FRESH OUT OF SOME BACKWATERS COLLEGE,
DOING WORK THAT NOBODY ELSE COULD DO, AND HAD EVERYONE SAYING, "THAT'S BECAUSE SHE'S SUPERIOR."
BUT I KNOW HOW MUCH EFFORT YOU PUT INTO IT.
"BE HAPPY."
YOU COULD HAVE JUST LOOKED DOWN ON SOMEONE LIKE ME, WHO COULDN'T EVEN LEAVE A MARK NO MATTER HOW HARD SHE TRIED,
BUT YOU DIDN'T. THAT'S COMMENDABLE.
"I CAN'T-"
BUT I GUESS YOUR BAD LUCK WITH MEN BALANCES THINGS OUT.

IF YOU...
"MAKE YOU HAPPY."
AM I WRONG?
JAPAN'S ATOMIC POWER GENERATOR
IF YOU UNDERSTOOD THAT,
THEN LEAVE ME ALONE.
BITCHY.
.....

RUSTLE...
RUSTLE...
RUSTLE...
.....
SAY,
AKIMOTO?

YOU KNOW,
I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT FOR A LONG TIME...
BUT I GUESS I DON'T KNOW WHAT CONSTITUTES HAPPINESS
STILL,
I'VE COME THIS FAR,
AND I KNOW THERE ARE PARTS OF ME THAT ARE UNPLEASANT OR WORTHLESS
I'M STARTING TO...GET TIRED OF DENYING THEM
EVEN SO...

ARE YOU STILL WILLING
TO BE FRIENDS WITH SOME-ONE LIKE ME?

RUSTLE

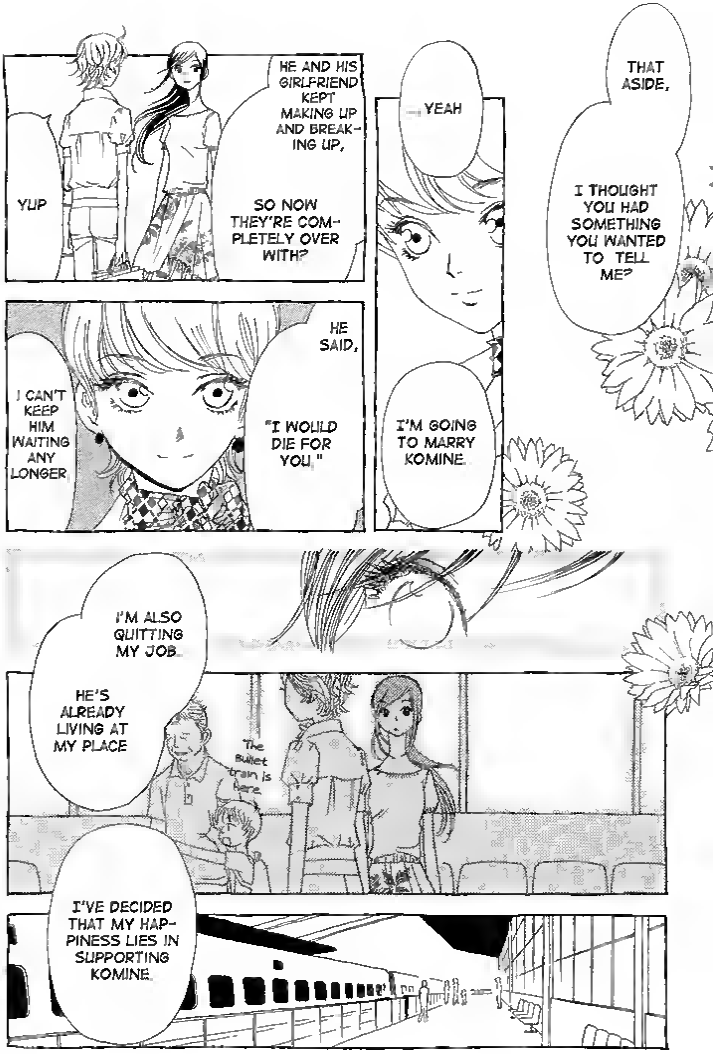
RUSTLE

CLINK

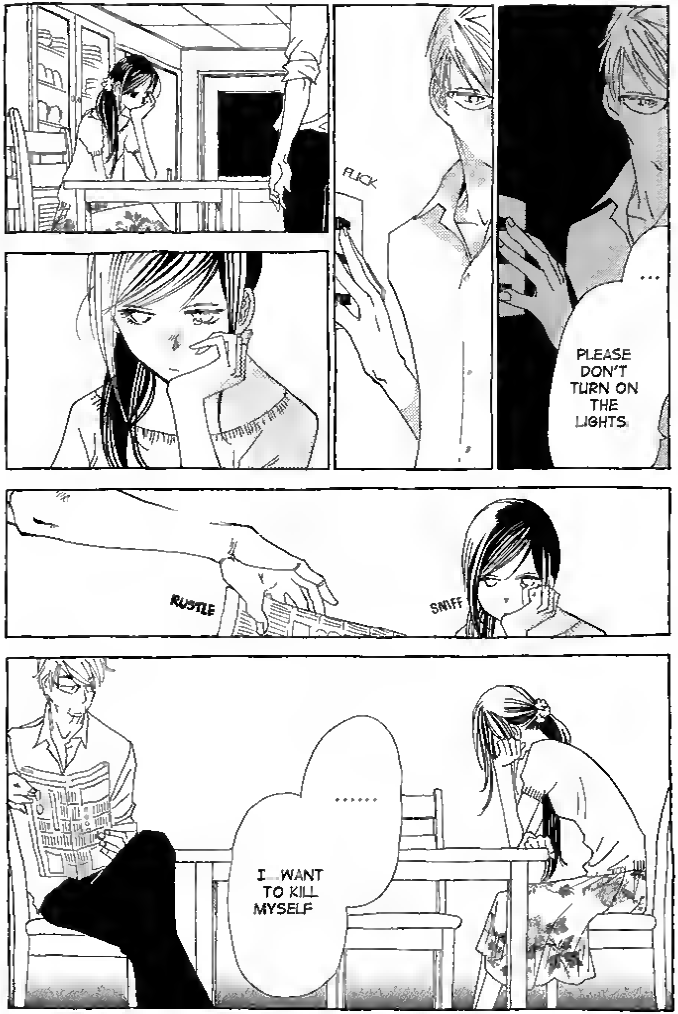
As of yet, Typhoon No.1 has not
come past
Central atmospheric pressure
is at 950 hPa and
Waves are unusual
Please be careful. Typhoon

CLACK
CLACK
CLACK
It's nothing!
CLACK
CLACK
DOES YOUR WIFE KNOW YOU'RE HERE?
WIFE?
WHAT ABOUT YOUR EX-WIFE?
I'M SINGLE
I'VE NEVER BEEN MARRIED BEFORE
Aah! Akimoto-kun...

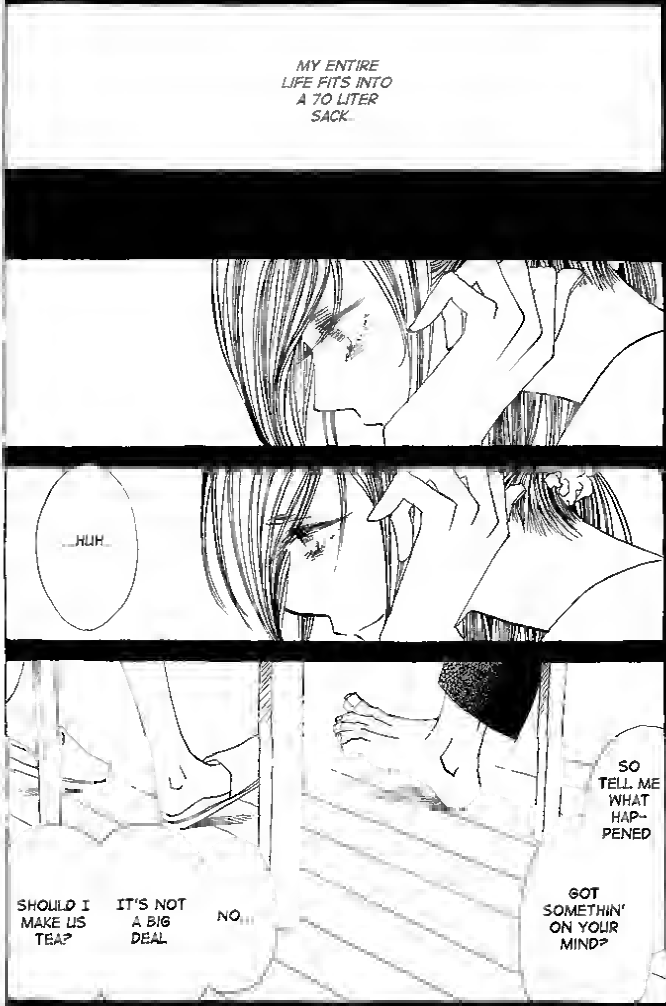
I'M NOT SURE WHY YOU HAVE TO ASK THAT FIRST THING IN THE MORNING.
BUT I CAN SEND YOU A COPY OF MY FAMILY REGISTER?
SMI RK
LAUGH
NO, THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY I APOLOGIZE
WHAT'S GOING OUT
...HE'S A NICE GUY.
THAT'S COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT YOU SAID AT FIRST...
MAYBE YOU GUYS HAVE SOME SORT OF CONNECTION?
FOR THE TIME BEING... I'LL PASS...
SURE...
...


THAT ASIDE,
I THOUGHT YOU HAD SOMETHING YOU WANTED TO TELL ME?
YEAH
I'M GOING TO MARRY KOMINE.
HE SAID,
"I WOULD DIE FOR YOU."
I CAN'T KEEP HIM WAITING ANY LONGER.
HE AND HIS GIRLFRIEND KEPT MAKING UP AND BREAKING UP,
SO NOW THEY'RE COMPLETELY OVER WITH?
YUP
I'M ALSO QUITTING MY JOB.
HE'S ALREADY LIVING AT MY PLACE
The bullet train is here.
I'VE DECIDED THAT MY HAPPINESS LIES IN SUPPORTING KOMINE.

I DON'T HAVE ANY DOUBTS


FLICK
...
PLEASE DON'T TURN ON THE LIGHTS.
RUSTLE
SNIFF
.....
I...WANT TO KILL MYSELF

I COULD JUMP OFF OF THE TREE IN THE BACKYARD
WHATEVER WORKS...
HOW'RE YOU GONNA GO ABOUT IT?
RUSTLE
IF YOU'RE GONNA JUMP, DO IT IN THIS.
YOU'LL BE ABLE TO FIT IN AT YOUR SIZE.
CLEANING WOULD BE A PAIN OTHER-WISE


MY ENTIRE LIFE FITS INTO A 70 LITER SACK...
...HUH...
SO TELL ME WHAT HAP-PENED
GOT SOMETHIN' ON YOUR MIND?
NO...
IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL
SHOULD I MAKE US TEA?